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## **The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation's Domestic Violence Awareness Month Commitments: \$3 Million Support of Shelters in All 50 States; Underwriting PBS Programming on DV and Children**

*Study Indicates Partner Abuse in Latino Homes May Be Higher Than General Populations*

DALLAS, Oct. 10 /PRNewswire/ – The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation (MKACF) today announced its support of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October 1-31).

The Foundation considers domestic violence one of the most devastating issues facing women and children in the U.S. today, and has taken the lead in helping educate and enable national dialog on the issue.

Funding three major, national initiatives is part of MKACF's 2005 fight against domestic violence:

- The Foundation has committed \$3 million to domestic violence shelters and safe houses in all 50 states. Each of 150 participating shelters/safe houses will receive a \$20,000 grant to meet needs specific to each of the recipient shelters.
- MKACF has underwritten the cost of *Breaking the Silence: Children's Stories*, a powerful 60-minute PBS documentary that chronicles the impact of domestic violence on children. Premiering on Thursday, October 20 at 10 p.m. (EDT) on PBS stations nationwide, the documentary features poignant interviews with children and adults who survived childhood violence. The program interviews mothers as well as experts on the issues as to how our courts and, most importantly, our children are faring in this fight.
- MKACF has also awarded the National Network to End Domestic Violence a grant that encourages its member State Coalitions to host screenings of *Breaking the Silence: Children's Stories*, and explore the issues in public discussions of domestic violence issues with supporters, policy makers and state and local officials.

According to a survey by the University of South Carolina College of Nursing, 70 percent of 300 Hispanic women surveyed reported they were victims of domestic violence. Of these, 43% reported multiple episodes of abuse during that time.

Smaller studies with Latinas suggest rates similar to those of the general population. A Survey conducted by the Immigrant Women's Task Force of the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights revealed that 34% of Latinas surveyed had experienced domestic violence either in their country of origin, in the U.S. or in both. A study with migrant farm worker women found that 25%-35% of patients at migrant health centers reported having experienced domestic violence within the previous 12 months.

“The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation is very proud to help advance the cause of ending domestic violence, whether by underwriting *Breaking The Silence: Children's Stories*, making the cash grants to family shelters and safe houses nationwide, or by helping to stimulate policy discussions at the state and local level,” said Michael Lunceford, president of the Foundation.

“The Foundation is deeply committed to eliminating the crime of domestic violence and to supporting programs that help domestic violence victims rebuild their lives. *Breaking the Silence: Children's Stories* is a powerful new documentary that chronicles the long-term effects of domestic violence on children,” Lunceford added. “This new PBS special features moving and unforgettable profiles of those struggling to put their lives back together, from the adult children of abuse to those experiencing trauma today.”

The PBS documentary, produced by Connecticut Public Television, is underwritten by a \$500,000 donation from the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation. In addition to interviews of children and battered mothers, the documentary features compelling segments with New York Yankees Manager Joe Torre, who dealt with domestic violence as a child and, in 2003, started the Safe-at-Home Foundation; and Walter Anderson, chairman and CEO of Parade Magazine, who addresses the effects and the emotional and physical toll he came to understand as a victim.

The Foundation, in partnership with Mary Kay Inc., previously underwrote the companion, groundbreaking documentary, *Breaking the Silence: Journeys of Hope*, which premiered on PBS in 2001. That program has aired more than 800 times and reached an estimated 98 million households across the U.S.

### **\$3 Million to Domestic Violence Shelters**

The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation has awarded shelter grants each year since 2000, increasing both the number and size of grants awarded from year to year. This year's total of \$3 million in grants represents a 100-percent increase from last year; the number of shelters receiving grants is up 50 percent, from last year's 100 to this year's 150; and the \$20,000 awarded to each participating shelter rose 33 percent from last year, when each participating shelter received \$15,000.

“The increase in our shelter grant awards again this year is due in large measure to the generosity of the tens of thousands of Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants who have contributed to the Foundation during the year.

“Their contributions at Mary Kay’s annual Seminars in Dallas this summer set new records for giving at that event. These Independent Beauty Consultants are so generous, and they are the ones who make it possible for our Company to continue its mission to enrich women’s lives,” Lunceford said.

Each recipient shelter or safe house submitted a grant application to the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation, specifying their needs and the projects any grant would help fund. The Foundation rates grant requests according to needs. Some recipients are struggling to keep their doors open, and others desperately need the funds for repairs, programs and other items their budgets don’t cover.

### **Stimulating a National Discussion**

“We hope and believe that Breaking the Silence: Children’s Stories will stimulate a national discussion of domestic violence issues during Domestic Violence Awareness Month,” Lunceford said.

To help that discussion along, the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation has also issued a grant to NNEDV to set in motion a number of state and local discussion forums around the country. Plans by some of these state and local groups include:

- The North Carolina Coalition against Domestic Violence will screen the documentary at a statewide workshop titled Connecting the Dots: Building Safer Communities.
- KPBS in San Diego will host documentary producer Dominique Lasseur at an October 18 reception, where a segment of his Breaking the Silence: Children’s Stories will be screened. The producer will speak and take questions.
- The Tennessee Coalition will create a Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation Great Women Breaking the Silence award to be presented at a special ceremony.
- In Texas, town meetings and forums are expected in Austin and Dallas during October, some in connection with PBS stations and some hosted by independent family violence advocacy groups.

Groups in several other states are planning public information programs that include newsletters, school auditorium presentations, Web site article postings, association forums and press conferences, among other activities.

## **Fighting Domestic Violence on Many Fronts**

In June, Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants lobbied for reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in Washington, D.C.

Originally implemented in 1995, the current law expires September 30. These Mary Kay Independent Sales Force leaders joined executives from the National Network to End Domestic Violence and other women from throughout the nation in urging Congress to renew and strengthen the current law.

“During the 10-year history of the Violence Against Women Act, states have passed more than 660 laws to combat domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking,” said Anne Crews, vice president of government relations at Mary Kay Inc. “But new legislation is now critically needed. Even with domestic violence reductions, as many as three million women are physically abused each year.”

Still earlier in the year, during February, Mary Kay Inc. made a first-of-its-kind grant to the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office to help provide resources the District Attorney can use to speed investigations and more quickly bring domestic violence criminal offenders to justice. “With this groundbreaking grant to aid in the enforcement of family violence laws, we are hoping to stimulate other corporations to consider similar grants to law enforcement in their hometowns,” Crews said.

## **About the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation**

The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation was created in 1996 to fund research of cancers affecting women, and in 2000, expanded its mission to include the prevention of violence against women. To date, the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation has granted more than \$13 million to these two causes.

For more information about the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation call 1-877-MKCARES (1-877-652-2737) or log on to <http://www.mkacf.org> .

## **Domestic Violence Fact Sheet**

### ***Widespread and Destructive Problem in Latino Communities***

Data collected by the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence; Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community; Centers for Disease Control Office of Minority Health; and other sources as noted.

## **Domestic Violence in Latino Communities**

- Accurate statistics regarding domestic violence in Latino communities are difficult to obtain due to present day data collection methods and strategies. National studies have produced conflicting results regarding the prevalence of domestic violence in Latino populations.
- Whereas the second Family Violence Survey<sup>1</sup> found higher levels of partner abuse in Latinos than in white populations (23% vs. 15%), two other national studies<sup>2</sup> found no difference between Latino and white participants.
- According to a survey by the University of South Carolina College of Nursing, 70 percent of 300 Hispanic women surveyed, reported they were victims of domestic violence. Of these, 43% reported multiple episodes of abuse during that time.<sup>3</sup>
- What may be of more interest and relevance to researchers, practitioners, and service providers than comparisons between Latino and other ethnic groups are the differences that have been found within Latino populations. In a national study, the highest rates of wife assaults among Latino respondents were reported for Puerto Ricans, followed by Mexicans, and Cubans. U.S. born Puerto Ricans and Mexican men were at highest risk for using violence against their partners.<sup>4</sup>
- Smaller studies with Latinas suggest rates similar to those of the general population. A Survey conducted by the Immigrant Women's Task Force of the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights revealed that 34% of Latinas surveyed had experienced domestic violence either in their country of origin, in the U.S. or in both.<sup>5</sup> A study with migrant farm worker women found that 25%-35% of patients at migrant health centers reported having experienced domestic violence within the previous 12 months.<sup>6</sup>
- Several factors, including discrimination and lack of bilingual/bicultural staff, have led to an under utilization of shelters and other domestic violence services by Latinas/os affected by domestic violence.<sup>7</sup> One study of undocumented immigrants found that for 64% of Latinas, a primary barrier of seeking help from social service agencies is the fear of deportation.<sup>8</sup>

## **Understanding Domestic Violence in Latino Communities**

- Domestic violence in Latino populations must be understood within the context in which it happens. A legacy of multiple oppressions (some of which began centuries ago) such as poverty, discrimination, racism, colonization, classism, homophobia, etc. makes it imperative that domestic violence not be viewed as a unidimensional phenomenon. This important social issue required that research, policy, advocacy and services be approached with an understanding of the intersectionality of social forces that are at work in the occurrence of domestic abuse in Latino families and communities.
- In addition, cultural factors such as a strong orientation toward family and community must be central to interventions and programs that attempt to address the problem in a culturally competent, effective, and respectful manner. The most recent approaches to domestic violence research and intervention strategies in Latino and other racial/ethnic communities

are beginning to shift their focus from the individual abused woman (or even the batterer or the couple) to the community problem that affects, and is affected by, many elements in the environment in which it occurs.

- Culturally specific batterer intervention programs for Latinos are being developed within the context of a comprehensive family intervention approach. These programs view domestic violence as a violation of human rights and a social malaise that is allowed to take place in many families. The interventions consider that, in a majority of cases, the abuse of men against women is a behavior that many males have learned at home and in a society in which violence is an accepted way of resolving differences.<sup>9</sup>

### **Domestic Violence in the General Population**

- Nearly 1 in 3 adult women experience physical assault by a partner during adulthood.<sup>10</sup> Nearly 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and older. This violence results in nearly 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths.<sup>11</sup>
- According to the National Family Violence Survey, the rates of “abusive violence” to women with annual incomes below \$10,000 are more than 3.5 times those found in households with incomes over \$40,000.<sup>12</sup>
- Domestic violence rates are 5 times higher among families below poverty levels, and severe spousal abuse is twice as likely to be committed by unemployed men as by those working full time.<sup>13</sup>
- Women, ages 16 to 24, and women in families with incomes below \$10,000 were more likely than other women to be victims of violence by an intimate.<sup>14</sup>
- Approximately 324,000 women each year are abused by their intimate partner during their pregnancy.<sup>15</sup> A 1999 study from John Hopkins, showed that abused women are more likely to give birth to low birth weight children, a risk factor for neonatal and infant deaths.<sup>16</sup>
- Violence against women by intimates is chronic in nature. Of the women raped by an intimate, 51.2% reported being victimized multiple times by the same partner. It is estimated that 1.5 million women in the U.S. are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually and that approximately 4.8 million intimate partner rapes and physical assaults are perpetrated against women every year in this country.<sup>17</sup>
- Domestic Violence is a major cause of family homelessness. As many as half of all women and children living on the streets became homeless because of domestic violence.<sup>18</sup>
- Estimated direct medical and health care expenses from intimate partners rape, physical assault, and stalking exceed \$5.8 billion each year.<sup>19</sup> Business forfeits another \$100 million in lost wages, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-productivity – about 25% of workplace problems can be attributed to family violence.<sup>20</sup>

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

- The overlap between domestic violence and child abuse is well documented. It is estimated that 40-60% of men who abuse women also abuse children.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2001, approximately 930,000 children were found to be victims of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological maltreatment, neglect, and medical neglect). Of these 19% were physically abused; 10% sexually abused; and 7% psychologically maltreated. The rest suffered neglect or medical neglect. Approximately 1,300 died of abuse or neglect in 2001.<sup>22</sup>
- Half of all children victims were White; 25% African American; 15% Hispanic; 2% American Indian/Alaska Natives; and 1% Asian/Pacific Islanders. Fifty-two percent were female and 48% were male.
- Children who witness their parents using violence against each other and who regularly receive excessive punishment are at increased risk of being involved in an abusive relationship as an adult.<sup>23</sup>
- Children who witness or experience violence in the home may suffer poor health, low self-esteem, are at high risk of alcohol and drug use, sexual acting out, running away from home, and suicide.<sup>24</sup> Infants and toddlers show excessive irritability, immature behavior, sleep disturbances, emotional distress, fear of being alone, and regression in toileting and language.

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Youth

- Approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.<sup>25</sup> One study found that 30% of young women, (between the ages of 15-19) murdered each year, are killed by their boyfriends or husbands.<sup>26</sup>
- Eight percent of high school age girls said “yes” when asked if “a boyfriend or date has ever forced sex against your will.”<sup>27</sup>
- Sixty-seven percent of males between the ages of 12 and 18 incarcerated for murder are there for killing their mothers’ abuser.<sup>28</sup>
- Ninety-four percent of incarcerated adult males were raised as either victims or witnesses to violence in the home.<sup>29</sup>

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